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March 20, 2006

LOUISIANA'S DOUG KERSHAW TO HEADLINE DELTA MUSIC MUSEUM'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL

BATON ROUGE, LA -- Secretary of State Al Ater announces that Louisiana's own Doug Kershaw will headline the Delta Music Museum's annual festival on April 1 in downtown Ferriday.

Mention Cajun music and the first thought that comes to mind is Doug Kershaw. The multi-talented Kershaw's name is synonymous with a genre of music that was on the decline before he helped revive it in the public eye back in the late 1960s. Although he is proud that he has helped bring Cajun music and Cajun culture to the forefront through his tireless musical efforts, his abilities to play other types of music have also helped to cement his legendary status in the music business.

His live performances feature an energetic, swirling mix of rock, blues, jazz, country and, of course, Cajun music. Once Doug gets warmed up, he takes his audience on a hyper kinetic joyride through a multitude of musical styles, some decades old, others more contemporary. He's one of the planet's world-renowned fiddle players, one of the best that have ever played the instrument. Both in concert and on record, he doesn't so much play the fiddle as he attacks it, sawing away so ferociously at times that clouds of resin rise from his bow, giving the audience the impression that the instrument is actually "smoking." It's truly awe-inspiring to see and hear Kershaw take his chosen muse to new heights; his fiery playing often times wearing out two or three bows per concert.

However, his talent is not just limited to his incredible fiddle playing. Over the years, Kershaw, known affectionately as the "Ragin' Cajun," has taught himself to play an amazing 28 instruments. He's also a top-notch songwriter and vocalist as well. And when the mood strikes him, he'll dance up a storm onstage while playing and singing. Many of his peers, including the great country/Cajun legend Jimmy C. Newman, consider Doug to be the best musician, singer, songwriter and performer to ever come out of Southwest Louisiana. His catalog of over 30 albums is a testament to his longevity as both a recording artist and a performer.

Born on a houseboat tied to a cypress tree in Tiel Ridge, Louisiana, an island off the Gulf of Mexico and in the heart of Cajun country, Kershaw has led an interesting and far-flung life. The son of an alligator hunter, Kershaw was the seventh born to a family that eventually included four boys and five girls. Raised in a home where Cajun French was spoken, he didn't learn English until the age of eight. By that time, he had mastered the fiddle, which he played from the age of five. His first gig was at a local bar, the Bucket of Blood, where his mother accompanied him on guitar.

Joining his brother's band, he eventually had several Top 40 country hits before being invited to join the Grand Ole Opry in 1957. In 1961, he recorded his career-defining song, "Louisiana Man," an autobiographical recording that immortalized his family, sold millions of songs and has been covered by more than 800 artists. The song became the first song to be broadcast back from space in 1969 by the Apollo 12 astronauts.

In 1969, Kershaw appeared on the premier broadcast of The Johnny Cash Show, a performance that won him millions of new fans, including executives at Warner Brother Records with whom he signed a long-term contract. Kershaw capped the year with a much publicized, weeklong, engagement at the Fillmore East in New York as an opening act for Eric Clapton's Derek & the Dominos. While it seemed to many rock and pop fans that Kershaw had appeared out of nowhere, he had already sold more than 18 million copies of the records he had done in the early 1960s.

Signature Kershaw songs like "Diggy Diggy Lo," "Cajun Joe," and "Rita, Put Your Black Shoes On," are familiar songs to Doug Kershaw fans worldwide. In the 1980s, Kershaw struck Top 40 gold with two more classics, "Hello Woman" and "Cajun Baby." Paying tribute to his Cajun heritage, Doug recorded Fievre De Deux Etapes (Two Step Fever), his first CD in Cajun-French, a treasury of songs he learned during his bayou childhood. A truly unique performer, Kershaw continues to expand his musical boundaries while remaining true to his Cajun roots.

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